

REMARKS

Claims 38, 39 and 41-75 are pending in the present application. Claims 38, 41, 42 and 74 have been amended and claims 40 and 76-78 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1-37 were canceled by a previous amendment. Claim 38 is independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claims 38, 39, 52-56, 58, 59, 67, 68, 70, 73 and 75-78 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Baroud et al., DE 197 25 269. Claims 38, 39, 52, 56, 58-60, 63, 67, 73 and 75-78 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Surer, FR 2 674 122. Claims 76-78 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rambert et al., GB 2 033 755 in view of Baroud et al. Claims 53-55 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Surer. Claims 62 and 69 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baroud et al. Claims 71 and 72 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baroud et al. in view of Sotereanos, U.S. Patent No. 6,284,002. Claim 57 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baroud et al. in view of Hansson et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, independent claim 38 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 40, which has been canceled. The Examiner indicated that dependent claim 40 is directed to allowable subject matter. Therefore, independent claim 38 should be in condition for allowance.

With regard to dependent claims 39, 52-60, 62, 63, 67-73 and 75, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable due to their respective dependence upon allowable independent claim 38, as well as due to the additional recitations in these claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 38, 39, 52-60, 62, 63, 67-73 and 75 clearly define the present invention over the references relied on by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 40-51, 61, 64-66 and 74 have been indicated by the Examiner as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants greatly appreciate indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

As mentioned above, claim 40 has been rewritten in independent form by adding the subject matter of claim 40 into independent claim 38. Therefore, independent claim 40 and dependent claims 39 and 41-75 should be in condition for allowance.

Favorable consideration and allowance of claims of the present application are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Paul C. Lewis, Registration No. 43,368 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Dated: July 26, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Paul C. Lewis

Registration No.: 43,368

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Rd

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant